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Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
Directorate-General
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**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME
IN THE SPHERE OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY –
PROGRESS**

2007 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2007 annual Plan of Work of the programme *PROGRESS* (hereafter *PROGRESS*) reflects the policy priorities of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities fields and the strategic objectives set out in the Social Agenda: "moving towards full employment: making work a real option for all, increasing the quality and productivity of work, and anticipating and managing change" and "promoting a more cohesive society: towards equal opportunities for all". It also reflects the general and specific operational objectives set out in the Decision establishing the *PROGRESS* programme¹.

The 2007 annual Plan of Work of *PROGRESS* also builds on policy priorities set out in the 2007 annual Policy Strategy "*Boosting trust through action*"² and in a Citizens Agenda for Europe "*Delivering Results for Europe*"³. It also takes account of the Better Regulation Agenda which puts emphasis on promoting better application of existing Community legislation and on improving the quality of legislative and policy initiatives through more systematic impact assessment and public consultation⁴.

The 2007 annual Plan of Work covers the EU-27 Member States as of 1 January 2007. It may be adjusted to take account of the possible participation of the EFTA/EEA countries in accordance with the conditions established in the EEA Agreement, the candidate countries associated to the EU, as well as the Western Balkan countries included in the stabilisation and association process.

Finally, the main priorities (by policy section) of the 2007 annual Plan of Work have been the subject of consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders.

¹ See document PROGRESS/2006/001

² COM(2006)122

³ COM(2006)211

⁴ COM(2006) 689 / 690 / 691

2. ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

Taking account of the Decision establishing the programme and the General Guidelines for its implementation, the 2007 annual Plan of Work is based on four general operational objectives and on specific operational objectives defined per policy section.

2.1. GENERAL OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

2.1.1. LAYING DOWN THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRESS

One of the key-challenges for 2007 will be to ensure timely implementation of *PROGRESS* so that activities can start as early as possible in the course of the year. *PROGRESS* is, in the main, a continuation of existing activities carried out in the respective policy fields. As indicated in the General Guidelines, emphasis will be put on consolidation of and building on the experience of previous Community programmes and actions. Activities which have been shown to be successful in terms of impact and efficiency will be continued under the present programme and, where necessary, slightly adjusted.

It follows that a number of activities foresee the establishment of structures which will enable to the Community to achieve the general objectives set out in the Decision related to "improving the knowledge and understanding of the situations prevailing in the Member States" and "supporting and monitoring the implementation of Community law or policy objectives in the Member States". For this purpose, relevant observatories, networks of specialised bodies foreseen under Community legislation, networks of national experts will be set up.

The availability of reliable information and quality analysis is also central to the EU policy development capacity. It follows that studies, analyses and the development of statistical tools are core elements of the 2007 annual Plan of Work of *PROGRESS*. This information will be used to inform policy development under the existing methods of open coordination in the employment and social protection and inclusion fields and within the various policy fields. Cooperation with international organisations or third countries, and in particular industrialised countries, will be developed to promote joint work and create synergies.

Work to improve the relevance of information goes hand in hand with the need to identify and disseminate examples of good practice and innovative approaches to the relevant stakeholders. *PROGRESS* will therefore support exchanges of good practices, promote mutual learning activities and transfer of knowledge both at national and European levels. The 2007 annual Work of Plan accordingly includes such activities, notably under the "employment" and "social protection and inclusion" sections.

PROGRESS also has a key-role to play in promoting the involvement of civil society, notably through financial support to key EU-level networks active in the fields of social inclusion, non-discrimination, disability and gender equality. Such involvement will foster accountability and transparency, and increase the relevance of policy responses. In this context, particular care will be taken to ensure smooth transition between the previous Community programmes and *PROGRESS*.

In operational terms, a total of 85 calls for proposals and calls for tenders are planned to be launched in 2007. This will translate into a heavy administrative and management

workload. Given the use, where relevant, of multi-annual frameworks or partnerships, such administrative and management work should progressively decrease over the years. Furthermore, appropriate planning will be essential in 2007 to take account of the capacity of potential beneficiaries to reply to calls for proposals and calls for tenders.

2.1.2. ENCOURAGING CROSS-CUTTING WORK

Given the integrated nature of *PROGRESS*, the 2007 annual Plan of Work contains a series of activities across sections. Apart from several cross-cutting studies, the following three elements are worth noting:

BETTER APPLICATION OF EU LEGISLATION: in relation to the better regulation agenda and following calls from the European Parliament for more effective and uniform application of EU legislation, an activity is planned to improve the knowledge and understanding of the application of EU legislation in Member States and to promote co-operation with Member States and other stakeholders (social partners, NGO's, judges, lawyers, and experts).

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIAL FORUM: according to the Communication on the Social Agenda and the *PROGRESS* Decision, a social Forum will be organised in the course of 2007 to take stock of the implementation of the social agenda and discuss future priorities. The results of the Forum will feed into the Communication of the Commission on the mid-term review of the Social Agenda planned in 2007.

SUPPORT TO EUROPEAN-LEVEL NGOS: Financial support covering three policy sections: disability, anti-discrimination, and gender equality will be granted to EU-level networks of NGOs through the publication of a single call⁵. Potential beneficiaries will be invited to identify cross-cutting issues and include them in their work programme.

2.1.3. COMMUNICATING ABOUT PROGRESS

One of the general objectives of the *PROGRESS* programme is to enhance the awareness of the stakeholders and the general public of the Community policies and objectives pursued under each of the five sections. This will contribute to bridging the "communication gap" between the European Union and its citizens. Furthermore, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey, the general public perception of the European Union's activities in the employment and social affairs field is overall positive, and notably in the fields of equality between men and women, combating discrimination and fighting against social exclusion and poverty.

Emphasis should therefore be placed on communicating on the concrete benefits and value added of EU employment, social and equal opportunities policies. It involves moving from institution-centred to citizen-centred communication as well as from a Brussels-based to a more decentralised approach. It also means making more systematic use of new communication tools, such as audiovisual tools and internet (a *PROGRES* web site will be available on EUROPA).

⁵ A similar single call covering all relevant sections will be launched in 2007 with a view to providing support to EU-level networks in 2008.

Activities in 2007 will focus on acquiring the necessary communication services through a framework contract to ensure coherence and synergies among policy sections. However, the Commission may operate specific communication contracts related to individual sections of *PROGRESS* during a transitional period of twelve months after their signature and, at the latest, on 31 December 2008. At the same time, general information material about the objectives and activities eligible under *PROGRESS* will be produced and disseminated as widely as possible, including at national and regional levels.

2.1.4. PUTTING IN PLACE A RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Implementation of *PROGRESS* should be focused on delivering results. This means developing and implementing policies and legislation that have a positive impact on European citizens. It also means demonstrating how the EU has contributed to tackling the main policy challenges. There is a need to move away from a management based on resource inputs, activities and outputs. Information on these aspects is essential but insufficient to demonstrate the results achieved. As a consequence and in line with the General Guidelines of the programme, a system will be put in place to measure and evaluate the efficiency and performance of *PROGRESS* and be part of the strategic framework to be adopted by the Committee in the course of 2007.

2.2. OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES BY POLICY SECTION

2.2.1. EMPLOYMENT

The 2007 Plan of Work will contribute to the achievement of the renewed Lisbon strategy and to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy. Furthermore, the 2006 Spring European Council underlined the need to further address specific issues, in particular the need to find a balance between flexibility and security through "*flexicurity*" and developing a life-cycle approach to work. At the same time, there is a continued need to improve matching of labour market needs through the modernisation of labour market institutions, notably employment services, and through removing obstacles to mobility for workers across Europe. These priorities will be reflected in the 2007 Plan of Work.

The activities planned will take into account the experience gained as part of the Employment Incentive Measures (EIM), notably the need to strengthen dissemination of results through conferences and publications. Adequate co-ordination will be established with the Employment Committee.

In this context, the 2007 Plan of Work will:

- promote the further development of statistics, indicators and surveys to support the monitoring of the European Employment Strategy; in addition, impact assessment models will be developed in view of the mid-term evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy in 2008;
- strengthen good governance and partnership with all relevant stakeholders through mutual learning activities, information and communication, and building ownership; pay particular attention to the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility through the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice;

- promote co-operation with third countries and relations with international institutions in the context of increased globalisation and possible future enlargements.

2.2.2. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

The 2007 Plan of Work will support the implementation of the open method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of social protection and inclusion. A close coordination with the Social Protection Committee (SPC) will be established. The *PROGRESS* activities will take into account the experience acquired during the Social Exclusion Programme, and notably the need to strengthen the dissemination of results through conferences and publications.

The primary concern in the social area is to promote good policy-making for a high level of social protection and social cohesion, while ensuring good interaction with the revised Lisbon Strategy and bridging the implementation gap identified in the review of Lisbon. The Presidency Conclusions of the 2006 Spring European Council also underlined the challenge of ensuring that the OMC and the revised Lisbon process are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the European Council reaffirmed the objective of the revised Lisbon strategy of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010.

PROGRESS will first of all provide the necessary information, analysis, research and statistical development necessary for the policy coordination efforts notably for a solid analysis and synthesis of social inclusion and social protection developments and policy orientations in the 2008 Joint Report. *PROGRESS* will also support the analysis of social trends and help to identify the issues which need to be considered in the OMC and research in the policy areas identified by the SPC, such as on the development of funded pension in the new Member States and related transition issues, and on improving knowledge on the workings of occupational pension schemes and private health insurances. Knowledge improvement may also involve analysing situations and solutions adopted in other industrialised countries.

Given the crucial importance of social services for well designed social policies, *PROGRESS* will need to support the policy efforts in this area, through support to the production of the bi-annual report. *PROGRESS* will support exchanges on policies and processes, good practice and innovative approaches as well as the promotion of mutual learning in the context of the social protection and inclusion strategies. There is also a need to increase the awareness of social policy challenges and notably the role the different levels need to play including the European one. Social policies need to be built on a strong involvement of civil society on all levels. Therefore, promoting specific activities and debate about the key challenges and policy issues raised in the context of the EU coordination among NGOs, regional and local actors, social partners and other stakeholders will also constitute a specific focus of *PROGRESS* activities under this section. Actions for the development of the capacity of key EU networks to provide support and further develop EU policy goals and strategies on social protection and inclusion will also be supported.

PROGRESS also gives the possibility of launching new types of activities, for example networking among specialised institutional bodies and the exchange of personnel between national/regional administrations. 2007 will be used to explore how to exploit these possibilities in practice. In the light of increasing globalisation and future enlargements, *PROGRESS* will feed into the bilateral cooperation with third countries and with international institutions.

2.2.3. WORKING CONDITIONS

PROGRESS will support the improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work and reconciling work and family life. In particular, the activities planned will support the development of a positive and pro-active approach to change through promoting adequate information: particular emphasis will be put on the employment and social consequences of economic and market integration and on adapting working conditions and contractual relations to the new economy with a view to fostering a new balance between flexibility and security. Another key issue will be to promote health and safety at work and to ensure that legislation and accompanying measures in this area are adequate in the light of new knowledge or technical progress.

PROGRESS activities under this section will cover the following items:

Adaptation to change and restructuring

- identifying the skills needs and the corresponding job profiles for the future in the light of the new requirements of the economy (in terms of competitiveness and innovation capacity). The outcomes will be used by education and training institutions, companies, social partners, local authorities. The activity planned will cover the main economic sectors (starting with the ICT and mechanical engineering and later extending to other key important economic sectors). This activity will feed into the work of the Restructuring Forum.
- continuing exchange of information and dialogue with stakeholders, in particular in the context of the Restructuring Forum. This will include carrying out preparatory studies on the themes to be discussed by the Restructuring Forum.
- improving knowledge on the restructuring phenomenon and disseminating among the relevant stakeholders a culture and the instruments of anticipation. This will include establishing the relevant networks and organising seminars with researchers and practitioners.

Health and safety, and well being at work

PROGRESS will support the launch of thematic campaigns in cooperation with the labour inspectorates in the Member States (SLIC) and the Bilbao Agency. Special attention will be paid to emerging risks such as work-related musculoskeletal disorders. This will include preparation of non-binding instruments, such as good practice guides, the improvement of statistical tools, and the collection of data on occupational accidents and diseases.

In addition, *PROGRESS* will support activities with a view to improving well-being at work:

- promoting a better understanding of work-related stress through the exchange of good practice and information, raising awareness on preventative measures. This will include the organisation of workshops in order to develop a network of practitioners/researchers in the field of well being at work.
- developing expertise and a better understanding of the economical aspects on occupational safety and health (e.g. insurance systems, indicators on cost of accidents and disease), and promoting exchange of knowledge and good practices in this field among stakeholders.

Labour Law

PROGRESS will cover the financing of a European network of legal experts, conferences on labour law issues and studies on specific aspects of individual directives.

Financial Participation

PROGRESS will cover the financing of conferences, workshops and other activities to support research and networking with a view to exchanging of information and best practices, raising awareness and improving knowledge on financial participation systems.

2.2.4. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY

The general objective of the policy section is to fight any discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. On basis of Article 13 of the Treaty, two Directives and a Community action programme were adopted in 2000⁶. Four years later, the Commission examined new emerging challenges in this field in its "Green Paper on Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU"⁷. Consequently, the Commission adopted in 2005 a "framework strategy on non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all"⁸. The activities financed under *PROGRESS* will be coordinated with the projects carried out in the framework of the European Year of equal opportunities for all. In turn, the outputs from the Year will feed into the implementation of *PROGRESS*.

Moreover, the Commission adopted two Communications in 2003 and in 2005 on equal opportunities for people with disabilities which emphasise the need for structured mainstreaming of disability issues in the changing EU economic and social environment. In this respect, the multi-annual EU Disability Action Plan, which forms an integral part of the Commission framework strategy on non-discrimination and equal opportunities, provides a dynamic framework for the mainstreaming of disability issues.

Against this background, *PROGRESS* will support the following main activities:

- guaranteeing effective legal protection against discrimination: the purpose of the EU anti-discrimination legislative framework is to lay down a set of principles on equal treatment including the definition of discrimination, protection against harassment, and the possibility to apply positive action, appropriate remedies and enforcement measures. As Guardian of the Treaties, the Commission is responsible for ensuring the proper and uniform application of Community law.
- overcoming the structural barriers to achieving equal opportunities: if legislation prohibiting discrimination is an absolute prerequisite, it is nevertheless unable on its own to achieve the goal of creating a society which is free from discrimination. The specific nature and scale of the phenomenon of discrimination call for a more proactive concept of equality, emphasising the responsibilities of public authorities at all levels of

⁶ Directive 2000/43/EC (Race Equality Directive) and Directive 2000/78/EC (Employment Equality Directive) + Council Decision 2000/750/EC creating the action programme (2001-2006).

⁷ COM(2004)379

⁸ COM(2005)224

governance to (a) identify and address issues of socio-economic disadvantages and systemic discrimination (b) guarantee actual access to rights and opportunities (c) implement legislative and programmatic measures in both the public and private sectors.

- supporting stakeholders and raising awareness of the civil society: beyond the implementation of legislation and the political action aiming at overcoming structural barriers to equal opportunities, the Community must also contribute to changing attitudes and behaviour. This entails increasing knowledge of the rights and responsibilities in the field of discrimination through public awareness-raising activities and promotion of diversity. *PROGRESS* will also support NGOs organised at EU level.

2.2.5. GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is a fundamental right, a common value of the EU and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives on growth, employment and social cohesion. Gender equality policy contributes to meeting the challenges of globalisation, ageing population and demography.

The policy objectives for the next five years are defined in the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2010) adopted by the Commission on 1 of March 2006⁹. This Roadmap builds on the experience of the Framework Strategy for equality between women and men for the period 2001-2005. It combines the launch of new actions and the reinforcement of successful existing activities. It reaffirms the dual approach of gender equality based on gender mainstreaming (the promotion of gender equality in all policy areas and activities) and specific measures.

The Roadmap outlines six priority areas for EU actions on gender equality for the period 2006-2010: equal economic independence for women and men; reconciliation of work, private and family life; equal participation of women and men in decision-making; elimination of gender stereotypes; eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking; promotion of gender equality outside the EU.

Against this background, *PROGRESS* will support the following priorities:

- contributing to the achievement of equal economic independence for women and men through gender mainstreaming in the Employment guidelines and in the open method of coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion.
- enhancing the reconciliation of work, private and family life through exchanges of experiences.
- promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making by setting up a European network and a database on women and men in decision making.
- eliminating gender stereotypes in society through gender equality awareness raising campaigns and dialogue with the media.
- improving governance at EU level through better implementation and control of the application of gender legislation and strengthening gender impact assessment and gender budgeting.

2.2.6. SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRESS

⁹ COM(2006) 92 final

This section will support activities linked to the implementation of *PROGRESS*. The 2007 Plan of Work will include the following main activities:

- launching the mid-term evaluation of *PROGRESS*;
- informing and communicating about *PROGRESS* (see section 2.1.3.);
- carrying out a forward study to help Commission and the Member States make better-informed longer-term decisions on the development of employment and social policies.

3. ANNUAL FINANCIAL ENVELOPE

The financial envelope for the 2007 annual Plan of Work is **81,9 million €**. It comprises both Operational and Administrative Expenditure. The breakdown per policy section results from the Budget 2007 adopted by the Budgetary Authority.

Employment		21,82%
Budget line 04.040101	Operational expenditure	17,00
Social protection and inclusion		29,40%
Budget line 04.040102	Operational expenditure	22,90
Working conditions		12,96%
Budget line 04.040103	Operational expenditure	10,10
Anti-discrimination and diversity		25,09%
Budget line 04.040104	Operational expenditure	19,55
Gender equality		9,24%
Budget line 04.040105	Operational expenditure	7,20
Support to the implementation of the programme		1,47%
Budget line 04.040106	Operational expenditure	1,15
Total		77,9

Administrative Expenditure		
Budget line		
Studies		0,4
Experts' meetings		2
Information and Publication		1,25
Administrative and technical assistance		0,35
Total		4

4. ACTIVITIES BY POLICY SECTION

The list activities reflects the typology of activities detailed in the Decision, namely analytical activities, mutual learning, awareness and dissemination activities and support to main actors' activities.

The activities have been identified on the basis of the following criteria:

- clear alignment with the outcomes and general objectives of the programme;
- consistency with the specific policy EU objectives and priorities, as set out in the relevant policy documents for each section;
- focus on activities with highest value added;
- support to key stakeholders who have the capacity to be involved in the development and implementation of the specific policy objectives and priorities at both EU and national levels.

The details of the activities, including short description, targets, timeframe and the selection procedure, are given in the attached table.